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Zagoury, David

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Minerva in The Forge of Vulcan: *Ingegno, Fatica* and Imagination in Early Florentine Art Theory

David Zagoury

The early modern sense of the notion of *ingenium*, a term firmly rooted in Latin rhetoric and ubiquitous in the genres of biography and eulogy during the Renaissance, is particularly hard to capture.[1] Writing in 2007, the art historian Édouard Pommier discusses the translation of a passage from the *Decameron* in which Boccaccio calls Giotto and Forese da Rabatta 'meravigliosi ingegni'.[2] 'Boccaccio is precise', remarks Pommier, yet 'it would be too simple to translate [*ingegno*] as "genius"'. Pommier suggests 'gifted with such talents of wit [*doté de tels talents d'esprit*]' and, elsewhere, settles on 'des intelligences supérieures'.[3] Several art historians before him likewise faced this challenge.[4] In addition to evoking personal nature, character, or innate qual-

[1] This research was first presented at the workshop *Ingenuity and Imagination in Early Modern Northern Art and Theory* at the University of Cambridge on 22 January 2016, and then in a revised form at the Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America in Boston on 31 March 2016. I am especially grateful to Claudia Swan for her precious feedback throughout the process of turning this paper into an essay. I would also like to thank the other editors of this volume for their attentive reading, as well as Alexander Marr, José Ramón Marcaida, Richard Oosterhoff and Raphaëlle Garrod for their comments and support.

[2] Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 6th day, 5th story.

[3] Pommier É., *Comment l'art devient l'art dans l'Italie de la Renaissance* (Paris: 2007) 34.

[4] In 1957 Erwin Panofsky translated *ingenium* as 'mental gift'. See Panofsky E., *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (London: 1970) 15. Michael Baxandall left *ingenium* untranslated in the English text in 1963. See Baxandall M., "A Dialogue on Art from the Court of Leonello d'Este: Angelo Decembrio's *De Politia Litteraria Pars LXVIII*", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 26, 3/4 (1963) 304-326, 320 and see n. 53. Martin Kemp in 1977 'followed the advice of Michael Baxandall' to avoid the term 'genius', tentatively proposing 'innate brilliance' instead. See Kemp M., "From *Mimesis* to *Fantasia*: The Quattrocento Vocabulary of Creation, Inspiration and Genius in the Visual Arts", *Viator* 8 (1977) 347-398, 351, n. 14. For further discussion, see Emison P.A., *Creating the "Divine" Artist: from Dante to Michelangelo* (Leiden – Boston: 2004) 321-348. For early modern attempts at translating *ingegno* into English see Marr A., "Pregnant Wit: *Ingegno* in Renaissance England", *British Art Studies* 1 (2015). On early modern *ingenium* and genius, see also Gensini S. – Martone A. (eds.), *Ingenium propria hominis natura* (Naples: 2002); Brann N.L., *The Debate over the Origin of Genius during the Italian Renaissance* (Leiden: 2002); and the classic study Zilsel E., *Die Entstehung des Geniebegriffes* (Tübingen: 1926).

ities, the notion *ingenium* also conveyed the idea of a certain modality of cognition. Its semantic field encompassed invention, problem-solving, imagination, perception and discourse. The etymological trajectory linking our current, laudatory term *genius* with the much more descriptive, early modern *ingenium* has yet to be traced. Among other things, its reconstruction is essential to our understanding of how mental abilities were conceptualized and valued during the Renaissance.

This essay contributes to our understanding of the cognitive ability subsumed under *ingenium* by reconstructing the role of the Italian notion of *ingegno* in mid-Cinquecento Florentine artistic practice and theory. At the time of the first critical appraisals of Michelangelo – the archetypal 'genius' for many centuries to come – the intellectual milieus which most fostered his fame, the circles of the Accademia Fiorentina (founded in 1540) and the Accademia del Disegno (founded in 1563), offered ample evidence for the uses and traction of the term. Indeed, *ingegno* was caught up in a number of theoretical discussions coinciding with what may qualify as the birth of art theory in the writings of Benedetto Varchi (1503-1565), a philosopher with a profound interest in the visual arts. Artists, as we shall see, were also involved, and even proposed allegorical personifications of *ingegno*. Our starting point is a micro-historical analysis of events that took place in the spring of 1547 when, over the course of a matter of weeks, crucial debates took place in Florence. In this context, *ingegno* was played off against *fatica* (labour, toil), a notion that also played an important role in academic culture. The traditional hierarchy of mental faculties, in which *ingegno* had pride of place, came to be reconsidered as Varchi suggestively assimilated *ingegno* with imagination. Simultaneously, practising artists vindicated the manual component of their work by extolling the values of *fatica.* The second half

of this essay posits that these theoretical debates found expression in a small painting on copper by Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574): *The Forge of Vulcan* (Uffizi). Looming over the episodes invoked here is the ghost of Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475-1564), not yet called a *genio* – but already 'angel divine'.

Ingegno and *Fatica*

Our enquiry begins with a little noted passage in a lecture on the arts by Benedetto Varchi delivered on 13 March 1547 before the Accademia Fiorentina in the church of Santa Maria Novella.[5] Varchi offers what is perhaps the most significant discussion of *ingegno* in mid-Cinquecento art theory, by pitting this term against the notion of *fatica* – toil, labour or, in the words of the *Vocabolario della Crusca*, the 'breathlessness and pain endured in the act of working'.[6]

[5] This lecture was published along with the one delivered on 6 March 1547 (discussed later on) in: Varchi Benedetto, *Due lezioni* (Florence, Lorenzo Torrentino: 1550) 56-155. (For all citations of the *princeps* I retain the title *verbatim*, but use the modernized 'lezzioni' everywhere else). It was published in Barocchi P. (ed.), *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento fra Manierismo e Controriforma* (Bari: 1960) vol. 1, 1-82, and in *facsimile* with German translation in Varchi Benedetto, *Paragone – Rangstreit der Künste: Italienisch und Deutsch*, eds. O. Bätschmann – T. Weddigen (Darmstadt: 2013). On these lectures, see also: Mendelsohn L., *Paragoni: Benedetto Varchi's Due lezzioni and Cinquecento Art Theory* (Ann Arbor: 1982); Bodart D. – Hendler S., "Il primo sondaggio della storia dell'arte: Benedetto Varchi e il paragone fra pittura e scultura", in Luzzatto S. – Pedullà G. (eds.), *Atlante della letteratura italiana* (Turin: 2010) 103-110; Varchi, *Paragone* 6-70. For a more complete review of bibliography on Varchi, see Jonietz F., "Varchi im Settecento: die Biblioteca Bartolommei, Florentiner Zensurmaßnahmen und eine wiederentdeckte Textfassung der beiden ersten Lezioni an der Accademia Fiorentina (1543)", *Wolfenbütteler Renaissance-Mitteilungen* 35 (2014) 21-39, 22-24.

[6] *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (Venice, Giovanni Alberti: 1612) 334: 'Affanno, e pena, che si sente, e si patisce nell'operare. Latino: labor'. The first work in Italian specifically dedicated to *ingegno* would appear some thirty years later, in 1576. See Persio A., *Trattato dell'ingegno dell'huomo*, ed. L. Artese (Pisa – Rome: 1999). On *ingegno* in the visual arts see the references in n. 4 above, as well as Kemp M., *Behind the Picture: Art and Evidence in the Italian Renaissance* (New Haven, Conn. – London: 1997) 226-255 and *passim*; Feser S., "Talent", in Burioni M. – Feser S. – Lorini V. (eds.), *Kunstgeschichte und Kunsttheorie: eine Einführung in die Lebensbeschreibungen berühmter Künstler anhand der Proemien* (Berlin: 2010) 293-295; Kemp M., "The "Super-Artist" as Genius: The Sixteenth-Century View", in Murray P. (ed.), *Genius: The History of an Idea* (Oxford: 1989) 32-53; Pfisterer U., "Ingenium und Invention bei Filarete", in Klein B. – von dem Knesebeck H.W. (eds.), *Nobilis arte manus. Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Antje Middeldorf Kosegarten* (Dresden: 2002) 265-289; Summers D., *The Judgment of Sense: Renaissance Naturalism and the Rise of Aesthestics* (Cambridge – New York: 1987) 99-101.

> All arts could tentatively be divided on the whole in the following way: in some arts one seeks and values more the *ingegno* than the *fatica,* and in others, on the contrary, one values and seeks more *fatica* than *ingegno*; furthermore, in some *ingegno* and *fatica* are on a par, while in others one needs nothing but *fatica.*[7]

In laboured scholastic style, Varchi goes on to explain that his distinction can be refined, mentioning various alternatives and specifying that the ratio between *ingegno* and *fatica* may vary, as can the absolute quantities of each. Artistic practice is subsumed, therefore, under a spectrum of typologies of work. The relationship between *ingegno* and *fatica* recalls the traditional pairing of *ingenium* and *ars* in classical rhetoric, frequently cited by the Italian humanists.[8] The traditional idea behind this coupling was that the arts always require inborn talent (*ingenium*, *natura*) as well as acquired skill (*ars*) – and, according to Horace, a 'friendly' alliance of both.[9] Varchi's binary, however, functions differently. According to his view, *ingegno* and *fatica* may

[7] 'Le quali tutte [arti] potremmo, per avventura, dividere generalmente in questo modo, che alcune sono nelle quali si ricerca e vale più lo ingegno che la fatica, et in alcune, all'incontro, vale e si ricerca più la fatica che l'ingegno; in alcune ancora sono pari l'ingegno e la fatica, et in alcune non fa di bisogno se non la fatica sola.' Varchi, *Due lezioni* 71-72; also in Barocchi, *Trattati* vol. 1, 18. It should be noted that at this stage of his lecture Varchi is still discussing *arte* in its broader acception, as including for example medicine or agriculture as well as the fine arts. The *fatica* and *ingegno* distinction is not categorical, as elsewhere Varchi speaks of 'fatica d'ingegno', Bronzino of 'fatica dell'animo' (Varchi, *Due lezioni* 94 and 103 respectively), and in Anton Francesco Doni we read that bronze sculpture is 'piu faticosa, d'ingegno, d'arte, et di mano'. See Doni Anton Francesco, *Disegno del Doni* (Venice, Gabriel Giolito di Ferrari: 1549) 18v. This nuance should be compared to the distinction made by Leonardo between *fatica di corpo* and *fatica di mente.* See Mendelsohn, *Paragoni* 54.

[8] Michael Baxandall has shown that the pair *ars et ingenium* was already applied to visual artists by Angelo Decembrio in the mid-fifteenth century. See Baxandall M., *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition, 1350-1450* (Oxford: 1971) 16 and Baxandall, "A Dialogue" 320. *Ingenium* was also paired with *industria, labor, manus, studium* and *doctrina.* Varchi's division also certainly owes to Galen's distinction between the intellectual (liberal) arts and the manual arts, which Varchi quotes earlier. However his *ingegno/fatica* distinction applies to the manual arts, as it follows Varchi's statement that 'all arts are mechanical [...] namely manual'.

[9] Horace, *Ars poetica,* 408-411. Other relevant passages on this duality include: Cicero, *De oratore,* I, 113-114; *Rhetorica ad Herennium,* III, 29.

coexist, but remain independent of and antithetical to one another as aspects of artistic work.

Varchi's dichotomous framing of *ingegno* invites us to elucidate this concept through its opposite. We may begin by enquiring briefly into the significance of *fatica*, thereby fleshing out the meaning of its counterpart, *ingegno*, through a form of *definitio ex negativo.* Indeed, unlike the traditional complements to *ingenium* (*ars, industria, doctrina*), the notion of *fatica* bore specific associations in the Accademia Fiorentina, under the aegis of which Varchi was operating.[10] The very fact that Varchi chose this term as *ingegno*'s rhetorical opposite deserves special attention. The relevance of *fatica* is clear, for example, from the debates on the *questione della lingua* which dominated the Accademia Fiorentina at mid-century. In a lecture published in 1547, the same year in which Varchi delivered the lecture we have been discussing, Giovan Battista Gelli (1498–1563) extolled the superiority of Tuscan by relying on the notion of *fatica*:

> The more an operation is peculiar to man, and according to his nature, the easier it is for him, and less laborious [*faticosa*] [...]. Our language [Tuscan] is less laborious [*men faticoso*] and easier than any other; therefore it is more appropriate and more in accord with [man's] nature. To see that this is true, think only that no other language is easier to learn than ours. Take somebody who does not know another language than his own and take him to Turkey, to Germany, among Spaniard, French or Slavonic people, or among any other

[10] On artistic *labor* in the Italian sixteenth century, see Jonietz F., "*Labor omnia vincit*? Fragmente einer kunsttheoretischen Kategorie", in Bleuler A.K. et al. (eds.), *Aemulatio: Kulturen des Wettstreits in Text und Bild (1450 - 1620)* (Berlin – Boston: 2011) 572-681, and its bibliography. I am grateful to Anna Magnago Lampugnani for sending me this reference.

> people you want; and then take him to us. You will see – and this is shown by experience – that he will not learn as much of any other language in a year as he will of ours in a month.[11]

Gelli does not refer explicitly to the *ingegno* or 'genius' of his language – in spite of this trope occurring already in Dante[12] – but his opposition between the laborious languages, which cause *fatica*, and the intuitive ones, clearly places Tuscan on the side of ingenuity. In considering what is 'peculiar to man, and according to his nature', he alludes to the very etymology of *ingenium* as *in-genium*, that which is inborn, 'genetic' or, as expressed for instance in the *Vocabularium* of the medieval lexicographer Papias, 'quasi intus genitum vel genium, idest naturale [almost within one's generation or inclination, namely natural]'.[13]

The Florentine academicians' ambivalent relation to *fatica* is also expressed in the *impresa* (emblem) chosen to adorn the frontispiece of their first publication. Above a

[11] 'Tanto quanto una operazione e all'huomo piu propria, & secondo la sua natura tanto gl'è anche piu facile & men faticosa [...]. Il parlare nostro gl'è men faticoso, & piu facile che alcun'altro; addunque gl'è piu proprio & piu secondo la natura sua. E che questo sia il vero, ponete mente, che nessuna lingua è piu facile a imparare, che la nostra. Pigliate uno che non sappia altra lingua che la sua, & menatelo in Turchia, nella Magna, fra Spagnoli, Francesi o Schiavoni, o tra quale altra gente si voglia; e poi lo menate tra noi; voi vedrete (& questo ne mostra la esperienza) ch'ei non imparera di qual si voglia lingua tanto in uno anno, quanto ei fara della nostra in un mese.' Giovan Battista Gelli, in *Lettioni d'academici fiorentini sopra Dante* (Florence, Doni: 1547) 35-36. The lecture, originally delivered in 1541, was included in Doni's volume without the lecturer's permission, and later republished with Gelli's *imprimatur* as *La prima lettione di Giovanbatista Gelli fatta da lui l'anno 1541, sopra un luogo di Dante nel XXVI capitol del Paradiso* (Florence, Torrentino: 1549). Promoting Tuscan was one of the main goals of the Accademia Fiorentina, and Gelli's argument is by no means the most daring to have been put forth in the *questione della lingua* debate. Pierfrancesco Giambullari claimed in his *Gello* (1546) that Tuscan derived from Aramaic through Etruscan, and not from Latin (thereby outclassing Rome), and later cited a document by Athenaeus of Naucratis found in the Biblioteca Laurenziana as evidence of Noah's coming to Tuscany.

[12] 'Et primo de siciliano examinemus ingenium [And first let us examine the genius of the Sicilian dialect]'. Alighieri Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia,* I, 12, 2, cited from id., *Dante's Treatise De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. A.G.F. Howell (London: 1890) 27.

[13] Papias, *Elementarium doctrinae rudimentum* (Venice, Philippus Pincius: 1496) 79v. On the rhetoric of *ingenium* as innate talent in sixteenth-century Italian art, see Keuper U., "Wie der Vater, so der Sohn? Luca Cambiasos ‚Selbstbildnis mit Porträt seines Vater'", *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 40 (2013) 129-148, esp. 140-142.

jumble of books supporting an oil lamp, the emblem displays a scroll bearing the motto *ΚΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΕΥΚΑΜΑΤΟΣ* [Fig. 1].[14] A passage by Lodovico Domenichi (1515-1564) in Paolo Giovio's (1483-1552) *Dialogo dell'imprese* explains that 'in our language the motto would sound something like *fatica senza fatica* (labour that does not tire), because although the study of letters is very laborious, the delight that one derives from it is so great that it does not cause *fatica* to the eager student.'[15] The academic ideal of *otium litteratum* is expressed as the transcendence of traditional labour.[16]

Fatica, then, did not only refer to the bodily consequences of physical exertion — the 'breathlessness and pain' described in the *Vocabolario della Crusca*'s definition cited earlier. Its connotations, rather, were dual: in addition to that which is corporeally exerting, *fatica* could also signal the intellectually challenging. In the discussion to follow, we shall reconstruct the view of Florentine artists on *ingegno* along two corresponding axes: difficulty and corporeality. Their perspectives on the matter will emerge from the relationship of *ingegno* to each of these notions. In relation to diffi-

[14] The Accademia Fiorentina previously had an *impresa* devoid of motto depicting three poets (supposedly Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio) and a river (supposedly the Arno). See Ciardi R.P., "'A Knot of Words and Things': Some Clues for Interpreting the Imprese of Academies and Academicians", in Chambers D. – Quiviger F. (eds.), *Italian Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (London: 1995) 37-60. Some academic lectures had been published separately with other presses without the Accademia's official stamp, such as Varchi's *Lettura sopra il sonetto della gelosia di Monsignor della Casa* (Mantua, Federico Sansovino: 1545). On the editions of the Accademia's lectures, see De Gaëtano A., "The Florentine Academy and the Advancement of Learning through the Vernacular: the Orti Oricellari and the Sacra Accademia", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 30, 1 (1968) 19-52, and Andreoni A., "Questioni e indagini per l'edizione delle Lezioni accademiche", in Bramanti V. (ed.), *Benedetto Varchi, 1503-1565* (Rome: 2007) 1-24.

[15] Giovio Paolo, *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose* (Lyon, Guglielmo Rouillio: 1574) 249: 'Il qual motto suona in nostra lingua, come sarebbe à dire, fatica senza fatica. Perche, anchorche lo studio delle lettere sia molto laborioso, è però tanto il diletto, che se ne trahe, che ciò non par fatica à chi lo fà volontieri'. Domenichi also says the *impresa* was originally designed by Francesco Campana on behalf of the Medici library at San Lorenzo.

[16] On *otium litteratum* and its relevance for the Italian academies, see Fumaroli M., "Academia, Arcadia, Parnassus: trois lieux allégoriques de l'éloge du loisir lettré", in Chambers D. – Quiviger F. (eds.), *Italian Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (London: 1995) 15-36. On this strategy in the rhetoric of Benvenuto Cellini, see Tylus J., *Writing and Vulnerability in the late Renaissance* (Stanford, Calif.: 1993) 44-53, and Turello D., "How Much Does it Cost to be Stylish? Ease, Effort, and Energy Consumption in Benvenuto Cellini's *Vita*", *Renaissance Studies* 29, 2 (2015) 280-293.

culty, we shall see how artists took the view that an ingenious creator is one who constantly wrestles with difficulty, developing a veritable culture of *difficoltà.* In relation to corporality, we shall see how the physicality involved in the making of art and its mimetic aims prevented artists from laying claim to *ingegno*, and how Varchi's doctrine of artistic creativity effected a shift.

Difficoltà: a Touchstone of Ingenuity

The academic culture of ingenuity outlined so far provides the backdrop against which Florentine architects, sculptors and painters were prompted to stake claims for the nobility of their arts. Most aspired to the status of academician – and indeed Agnolo Bronzino (1503-1572), Il Tribolo (Niccolò de' Pericoli, 1500-1550), Michelangelo and Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571) were all early members of the Accademia Fiorentina, yet only as poets.[17] Their appraisal of *ingegno* and *fatica*, however, stood in stark contrast to that of the academicians. A record of their views survives in an opinion poll Varchi ran in 1547. In preparation for his 13 March lecture on the arts Varchi famously canvassed his most eminent artist friends (including Michelangelo, Bronzino, Jacopo da Pontormo, Tribolo, Cellini, and Giorgio Vasari) on the *paragone* debate – that is, the question of which of the figurative arts (painting or sculpture) should be regarded as the noblest.[18] The results of what has been called the 'first poll in the history of art' show that artists appraised *fatica* in a manner radically different

[17] Other artist members include Francesco da Sangallo and Baccio Bandinelli. See Mendelsohn, *Paragoni* 25-26; Heikamp D., "Rapporti fra accademici ed artisti nella Firenze del '500", *Il Vasari* 15 (1957) 139-163; Quiviger F., "The Presence of Artists in Literary Academies", in Chambers D. – Quiviger F. (eds.), *Italian Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (London: 1995) 104-112.
[18] The lecture is the second of the *Due lezzioni*. See n. 5 above. The term *paragone* was not used by Varchi; it gained art-critical currency after Guglielmo Manzi's 1817 edition of Leonardo's *Trattato della pittura.*

from the *letterati* – and that difficulty was an apple of discord.[19] Vasari's reply to Varchi is, as is to be expected, the most articulate:

> I say this: all things which are easy to the *ingegno* are less artful. And to show you the excellence of both [painting and sculpture] and let you judge for yourself, you can, if you wish, do this: take a ball of earth and form a face, an animal or any other thing by hand, without concern for colour, light, or shadow; and once this is done, take a sheet of paper and draw the same thing on it, and once you have outlined it, try to shade it in with your stylus, pen, pencil or paintbrush. And with this you will make your work such that you will judge the facility and quality of one and the other; and that which will be easier to realize you should find less perfect.[20]

Grounding his argument on a practical experiment, Vasari's line of reasoning perfectly mirrors Gelli's on second language acquisition – only to reach a diametrically opposed conclusion. While for the latter facility implied greater ingenuity, for the former the noblest pursuit was, by definition, the most difficult.

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[19] Bodart – Hendler, "Il primo sondaggio", 103. Erwin Panofsky went further, calling it 'perhaps the first public opinion poll'. Panofsky E., *Galileo as a Critic of the Arts* (The Hague: 1954) 3. On this episode, see also Rossi S., *Dalle botteghe alle accademie: realtà sociale e teorie artistiche a Firenze dal XIV al XVI secolo* (Milano: 1980) 89-122.

[20] 'Dico questo: che tutte le cose che facile all'ingegno si rendano, quelle meno artificiose si giudicano essere; e per voler mostrarvi la eccellenzia di tutte due, e voi di esse giudice, potrete, piacendovi, far così: pigliate una palla di terra e formate un viso, uno animale di man vostra o d'altro incerto, nella quale, mentre che ciò farete, non arete a cercare né del colore, né de' lumi o dell'ombre; e finito questo, pigliate una carta e disegniatevi su il medesimo, e quando dintornato avete le prime linee, voi con lo stile, o penna o matita o pennello, cominciate a ombrarla. E [con] questo vi si renderanno nell'opera vostra tali, che voi giudicarete la facilità e bontà dell'una e dell'altra; e quella che vi sarà più facile a esercitarla troverete manco perfetta.' Vasari in Varchi, *Due lezioni* 122. The zeal with which Vasari formulated his response, dated 12 February 1547, is easy to understand. Aged 36 at the time, this is Vasari's first officially published piece of writing.

Vasari's cult of *difficoltà* epitomizes the strategic response of artists to the *otium litteratum* of the academicians. It implies a remarkable valuation of *fatica*: Michelangelo, Vasari wrote, 'had a real propensity for the labours [*fatiche*] of art, given that he succeeded in everything, no matter how difficult it was, for he had received from Nature a very fit *ingegno* that was well adapted to his exceptional talents in the art of design'.[21] The artist's *ingegno* is praised as the capacity that draws him toward the challenges of ever more difficult work, while *fatica* is a value and a point of pride, linked to the idea that 'greater efforts [*fatiche*] and dangers are reasons for greater nobility'.[22] Sculptors bully painters accordingly by calling their trade 'a women's profession [*mestiere delle donne*]' because it requires less *fatica*.[23] This line of reasoning gave rise to an altogether different form of *fatica senza fatica*. An ingenious work was one that generated a second type of illusion beyond pictorial *mimesis*: the illusion of effortlessness.[24] Indeed, for Vasari Michelangelo 'surpassed and triumphed over the ancients, for in his works he knew how to wrest things out of difficulty [*difficultà*] with such ease, that they appear to be executed without effort [*fatica*], although whoever later tries to sketch his works will expend much effort in imitating them'.[25] What Alfred Gell called 'the halo effect of technical difficulty' is implicit in this aesthetic axiology.[26] It should come as no surprise, then, that artists rebuked academi-

[21] Vasari Giorgio, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Bondanella J.C. – Bondanella P.E. (Oxford: 1991) 471, with 'mind' for *ingegno*. For the Italian original see Vasari Giorgio, *La Vita di Michelangelo nelle redazioni del 1550 e del 1568*, ed. Barocchi P. (Milan: 1962) vol. 1, 116; Vasari Giorgio, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori, nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, eds. R. Bettarini – P. Barocchi(Florence: 1966) vol. 6, 108.
[22] Vasari, *Le vite* vol. 1, 19.
[23] Varchi, *Due lezioni* 108: 'E quando fusse più difficile la pittura, direbbero gli scultori, i quali la tengono mestiere da donne a comperazione della scultura, che questa ragione fa per loro, perché bisogna più fatica a voler dare ad intendere la bugia [...]'.
[24] This recalls Baldassare Castiglione's notion of *sprezzatura* as the talent of concealing *arte* ('vera arte che non par esser arte'). What seems done 'senza fatica' has *grazia*, and what is forced causes *disgrazia.* See Castiglione Baldassare, *Libro del cortegiano* (Venice, Figliuoli di Aldo: 1547) 19v.
[25] Vasari, *The Lives* 471 (amended); Vasari, *Le vite* vol. 6, 108.
[26] See Gell A., "The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology", in Hirsch E. (ed.), *The Art of Anthropology: Essays and Diagrams* (Oxford: 2006) 159-186, 166. This essay was first published in 1992.

cians such as Varchi and Gelli for their tendency to overlook the physical and material demands of artistic practice. This is perfectly captured by an anecdote about Michelangelo himself. It is said that, upon encountering the master, Varchi complimented him thus: 'Signor Buonarroti, you have the brain of a Jove!' To which Michelangelo replied: '...but Vulcan's hammer is required to make something come out of it'.[27] In other words, to praise of his *ingegno* the artist felt compelled to retort that *fatica* was required in equal measure.[28]

Varchi's attitude toward labour can in part be traced to the scholastic training he received at Padua and Bologna. A pupil and friend of Lodovico Boccadiferro at Bologna, he adhered to Aristotelian faculty psychology and its insistence on a hierarchy among the 'internal senses'.[29] In particular, Varchi embraced a theory drawn from Themistius's paraphrase of *De anima* according to which life is structured like an ascending chain of matter (thing in potency) and form (thing in act), the two constantly intertwined.[30] At the bottom of the chain is inanimate matter, which is less perfect,

[27] Clements R.J., *Michelangelo's Theory of Art* (London: 1963) 35.
[28] A similar dialectic can be found in the artists' replies to Varchi's 1547 poll. Bronzino, for example, after praising Varchi's *raro ingegno*, begins by emphasizing that he 'perhaps won't be able to express entirely with words or ink the pains [*fatiche*] endured by an artist in his work' (Varchi, *Due lezioni* 132). Concurrently, we can in fact discern two moments in Varchi's attitude to *fatica.* The first section of his lecture (*Prima disupta*) was clearly composed before the poll. In it, Varchi is still an unsparing intellectualist, and calls the manual arts 'vile and disgraceful, [...] practiced with bodily strength and pain [*forze e fatiche del corpo*], which the Greeks, because one works with the hands, call *chirurgicas*', opposing them to the 'liberal and honest' *trivium* and *quadrivium* (Varchi, *Due lezioni* 70). The *Seconda disputa* of his lecture was rewritten after Varchi had received the artists' opinions (except for Michelangelo's, which only reached Varchi early in 1550, see Bodart – Hendler, "Il primo sondaggio", 104-106). In it, his views on the bodily aspect of the manual arts are considerably toned down. At times, he virtually suspends his intellectualist views in order to take into account the arguments imparted to him by the artists, such as claims that greater *fatica* implies greater nobility due to *difficoltà.*
[29] Varchi knew this theory through the works of Marcantonio Zimara. Varchi's manuscripts on psychology have come down to us and were recently reexamined by Marco Sgarbi. See Sgarbi M., "Benedetto Varchi on the Soul: Vernacular Aristotelianism between Reason and Faith", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 76, 1 (2015) 1-23.
[30] Sgarbi, "Varchi on the Soul" 3. On Varchi's knowledge of Zimara's *Theoremata,* note that in the *Due lezzioni* he pays homage to 'the great Philosopher M. Marcantonio Zimara in his most erudite *Teoremi,* to which all scholars owe much for good Philosophy, since he was among the firsts who, having rid himself of the excessive subtleties and sophistries of the Latins, followed the Greek Authors, and promoted truth in all other respects' (Varchi, *Due lezioni* 34).

and at its top, the 'agent intellect'. Inanimate matter in act is the vegetative soul; the vegetative soul in act is the sensitive soul; the sensitive soul in act is the imagination; and so on up to the agent intellect. This hylomorphic version of the *scala naturae* ends not with the highest being (God), but with the highest (and least material) intellective power. The model of an ascending pyramid from the more material to the more immaterial colours Varchi's thinking about the arts and even his lectures on Dante.[31] Yet such a system, by making the immaterial paramount, necessarily disregards the material aspect of artistic creation. Varchi's theory of art requires, in that sense, an effort of integration. As we shall see, it is through his theory of artistic imagination that he effected such an integration.

Corporality and Imagination

The tendency of the Florentine academicians to overlook the physical demands of artistic practice is probably linked to the role they ascribed to *ingegno.* Just as *fatica* bore connotations of physicality, *ingegno* evoked the immaterial and the purely intellectual. This was also reflected in the objects traditionally ascribed to *ingegno* understood as mental power. According to the classical tradition, *ingenium* was not an empirical faculty. It had no purchase on the sensible world, and mostly concerned immaterial objects of thought. As Cicero, who was often quoted in the Accademia Fiorentina, explains, 'a great *ingenium* is able to abstract the mind from the senses and separate thought from the force of habit.'[32] Moreover, for the scholastics, whose thought

[31] Indeed, Varchi's mid-March lecture begins with a review of the hierarchical structure of the soul (particular reason, universal reason, and within the latter practical intellect, speculative intellect, etc.). See Varchi, *Due lezioni* 58-59.
[32] Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* I, 16, 39: 'Magni autem est ingenii sevocare mentem a sensibus et cogitationem ab consuetudine abducere.'

still dominated Italian universities, *ingenium* was 'the extension of the intellect given to the cognition of the unknown [*cognitio incognitorum*]'; it was the source of logic, and opposed to *experientia*.[33] According to its traditional theoretical makeup, *ingegno* was conceived of as the capacity to manipulate abstract entities, and was active in acts of language and thought. Broadly speaking, however, it was inoperative in the observation of nature and its visual rendition in pictures.[34] Leonardo, who had some familiarity with the philosophical tradition, demonstrates an awareness of this conceptualization when he associates *ingegno* with the work of poets, and *fantasia* with that of painters: 'if you call painting mechanical because it is primarily manual, in that the hands depict what is found in the imagination [*fantasia*], you writers draft with your hands what is found in your *ingegno*'.[35]

The legacy of *De anima* was that *phantasia* – the imagination – enabled the apprehension of visual images. *Phantasia* served as the missing link between the material world and the intellectual world, granting the possibility of empirical knowledge.[36] Italian philosophy at the dawn of the sixteenth century was marked by the publication

[33] 'Ingenium [...] est extensio intellectus ad incognitorum cognitionem'. de La Rochelle Jean, *Tractatus de divisione multiplici potentiarum animae*, ed. P. Michaud-Quantin (Paris: 1964) 96, where it is opposed to, among other terms, *experientia,* which is 'certitudo rerum facta per sensum'. The idea was authoritative, and could be found in the *De spiritu et anima* (wrongly) attributed to Augustine. See Lynch K.L., *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy, and Literary Form* (Stanford, Calif.: 1988) 207, n. 48. The phrase was quoted by Cristoforo Landino in a definition of *ingegno* from his influential commentary on the *Divine Comedy.* See Alighieri D. – Landino C., *Comento di Christophoro Landino Fiorentino Sopra la Comedia di Danthe Alighieri Poeta Fiorentino* (Brescia: 1487), unpaginated, *ad* Inferno, 2, 'o alto ingegno'.

[34] This does not prevent early modern commentators from speaking of the natural abilities of a painter in terms of *ingegno* for laudatory purposes, in spite of the particular connotations of this term in faculty psychology. For a survey of the application of the word *ingegno* to artists in the fifteenth century, see Kemp, "*Mimesis* to *Fantasia*" 384-398.

[35] da Vinci Leonardo, *Leonardo on Painting*, eds. and trans. M. Kemp – M. Walker (New Haven – London: 1989) 46, with 'mind' for *ingegno.* We may interpret this as Leonardo's response to authors who explicitly deny *ingegno* to visual artists. This was the case of Angelo Decembrio in *De politia litteraria*, where Leonello d'Este states that 'the ingenium of writers [...] is a divine thing and beyond the reach of painters'. See Baxandall, "A Dialogue" 320, later discussed in Kemp, "Mimesis to Fantasia" 386-389.

[36] On *phantasia* in Aristotle, see in particular Frede D., "The Cognitive Role of Phantasia in Aristotle", in Nussbaum M.C. – Rorty A.O. (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle's De anima* (Oxford: 1995) 279-295.

of the first *ad hoc* treatise on the faculty of imagination, Gianfrancesco Pico's *De imaginatione* (1501), in which this argument was cogently rehearsed:

> Since man is constituted of the rational soul and body, and is, so to speak, a conjunction of the two; and since the substance of the spiritual soul is very different from the earthly structure of the body; it naturally followed that the extremes were joined by a suitable mean, which in some way should partake of the nature of each, and through which the soul, even when united to the body, should perform its own functions. What communication would the rational part have with the irrational, if there were not phantasy [*phantasia*] intermediate, somehow to prepare for reason the inferior nature, and to set up this nature to be cognized?[37]

The bedrock of early Cinquecento art theory was still the imitation of nature (*mimesis*), which implied that the artist should have a particular conversancy with the phenomenal world. Therefore, it seems clear that from a philosophical perspective imagination (or *fantasia*), and not *ingegno*, would be considered essential to the creative act.[38] The question of which mental faculty was involved in artistic practice was an

[37] Pico della Mirandola Gianfrancesco, *On the Imagination*, ed. and trans. H. Caplan (Westport, Conn.: 1971) 41 (chap. VI). On imagination in sixteenth-century philosophy, see notably Park K., "Picos *De Imaginatione* in der Geschichte der Philosophie", in Kessler E. (ed.), *Über die Vorstellung = De imaginatione: lateinisch-deutsche Ausgabe* (München: 1984) 16-40; Park K., *The Imagination in Renaissance Psychology*, M.Phil. Dissertation (Warburg Institute: 1974); Spruit L., *Species intelligibilis: from Perception to Knowledge* (Leiden: 1995); Tirinnanzi N., *Umbra naturae: l'immaginazione da Ficino a Bruno* (Rome: 2000); Kavey A. (ed.), *World-building and the Early Modern Imagination* (New York: 2010).

[38] On imagination in Renaissance art theory, see in particular Kemp, "*Mimesis* to *Fantasia*"; Summers D., *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (Princeton, N.J: 1981); Krüger K. – Nova A., "Einleitung", in Krüger K. – Nova A. (eds.), *Imagination und Wirklichkeit: zum Verhältnis von mentalen und realen Bildern in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit* (Mainz: 2000) 7-11; Swan C., "Eyes Wide Shut: Early Modern Imagination, Demonology and the Visual Arts", *Zeitsprünge. Forschungen zur Frühen Neuzeit* 7, 4 (2003) 560-581; Parshall P., "Graphic Knowledge: Albrecht Dürer and the Imagination", *The Art Bulletin* 95, 3 (2013) 393-410; Seiler P., "*Trovare cose non vedute*. Naturnachahmung und Phantasie in

important concern in early art theory propounded by Varchi at the Accademia Fiorentina, whose lectures can be read as an effort to harmonize the Neoplatonic elements of Michelangelo's writings with Varchi's own scholastic tendencies. As we shall see, in doing so Varchi confirms the central role of *fantasia* in artistic creation, while crucially opening up the possibility of pictorial *ingegno* by suggestively assimilating *fantasia* to *ingegno.*

In a lecture he gave on 6 March 1547 (one week before his address on the *paragone*), Varchi proposed a commentary on Michelangelo's poem, *Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto*.[39] In this text, Michelangelo affirms that a sculptor works according to a visual *concetto* in his mind, the realization of which requires that 'the hand obey the intellect [*la man ubbidisce all'intelletto*]'.[40] Given the hierarchy of mental faculties implied in his philosophical system, Varchi was concerned with Michelangelo's Neoplatonic use of the term *intelletto.*[41] What he really meant, Varchi argued, was *fantasia*.

Cennino Cenninis *Libro dell'arte*", in Brüllmann P. – Rombach U. – Wilde C. (eds.), *Imagination, Transformation und die Entstehung des Neuen* (Berlin: 2014) 111-154.

[39] This lecture was published integrally in Buonarroti Michelangelo, *Le rime di Michelangelo Buonarroti, pittore, scultore e architetto*, ed. C. Guasti (Florence: 1863), LXXXV-CXII, and partially in Barocchi P. (ed.), *Scritti d'arte del Cinquecento* (Milan – Naples: 1971) vol. 2, 1322-1341. For a list of the previous editions, see Andreoni A., *La via della dottrina: le lezioni accademiche di Benedetto Varchi* (Pisa: 2012) 20, n. 27. On the lecture, see Carlson R., "'Eccellentissimo poeta et amatore divinissimo': Benedetto Varchi and Michelangelo's Poetry at the Accademia Fiorentina", *Italian Studies* 69, 2 (2014) 169-188. On Varchi's theory of imagination, see also Quiviger F., "Benedetto Varchi and the Visual Arts", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987) 219-224; Siekiera A., "Identità linguistica del Vasari 'artefice'", in Corrain L. – Di Teodoro F.P. (eds.), *Architettura e identità locali* (Florence: 2013) 113-123; Sgarbi, "Varchi on the Soul".

[40] For the poem and its translation, see Buonarroti M., *The Poetry of Michelangelo: an Annotated Translation*, ed. and trans. Saslow J.M. (New Haven, Conn.: 1991) 302, no. 151.

[41] Interestingly Varchi, as a philosopher and not an artist, could be confident in saying that he would write 'ubbidendo la mia lingua all'intelletto [with my language obeying my intellect]', pastiching Michelangelo (Varchi, *Due lezioni* 11). For Gelli, the reason why the intellect fails to grasp abstract entities (like God) is that it 'turns to the *fantasia*' which is 'material and sensible' thus incapable of rendering any of the object's qualities, 'as said Cardinal Bessarion, most excellent Platonist'. See his May 1549 lecture at the Accademia Fiorentina, in: Gelli Giovanni Battista, *Lezioni petrarchesche*, ed. C. Negroni (Bologna: 1969) 249.

> The word *intelletto* means many things [...] but in this very passage it should be understood otherwise, namely as the faculty, or virtue, which is called *immaginazione* or *fantasia*, which we have discussed several times, and which is not only distinct from the *intelletto*, but different, because the latter is immortal according to the best Philosophers, while the former is, without a doubt and according to all, mortal. And although it composes, divides, and finally reasons [*discorre*] (like the rational Soul), nonetheless it does not reason with universal entities, but only with particular ones.[42]

Varchi also rephrased *concetto* as 'the imagined thing', and 'not having a *concetto*' as 'not imagining, not being able to simulate in the *fantasia*', thus reaffirming the centrality of imagination.[43] He did, however, incorporate a pivotal element of Neoplatonism into his theory by admitting that this *concetto*, now object of the *fantasia*, could be equated with the Platonic idea. Thus, if Varchi seemed reluctant to consider the artist's model as a *universal* entity, as evidenced by the passage quoted above, he nonetheless granted it the status of the *immaterial*.[44] It is through this transubstantiation of the object of imagination, from corporeal to incorporeal, that Varchi makes *ingegno* a potential agent in the mental task of image-making, as this passage suggests:

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[42] 'Questo nome Intelletto significa più cose [...] ma in questo luogo si piglia altramente, ciò è per quella potenza o virtù che si chiama immaginazione, o vero fantasia, della quale avemo ragionato più volte, la quale non solamente è differente dall'intelletto, ma diversa, essendo quello immortale appresso i più veri filosofi, e questa appresso tutti e senza alcun dubbio mortale. E se bene compone, divide e finalmente discorre come l'anima razionale, discorre però non le cose universali, come quella, ma solamente le particolari.' Varchi, *Due lezioni* 30-31, also in Barocchi, *Scritti* vol. 2, 1337. Varchi further suggests that Michelangelo was in fact talking about what John Philoponus (Giovanni Gramatico) called the 'passive intellect [*intelletto passibile*]', which is just another word for the imagination (for his source text, see Quiviger, "Varchi and the Visual Arts" 223 and n. 39).

[43] Varchi, *Due lezioni* 21.

[44] For Michelangelo's and Varchi's reception of Platonic idea theory, see the classic Panofsky E., *Idea: a Concept in Art Theory* (New York: 1968) 115-126.

> Not all masters know how to imagine beautiful [things], nor to carry to perfection what they have imagined, because on top of what the Greeks name *idea* [...], namely the image that one forms in the *fantasia* each time one creates, art and practice are also required.[45] Hence he who does not possess [art and practice] may imagine well and execute poorly, because for the manual arts the *ingegno* does not suffice, exercise is also required. [...] The only real master is the one who can perfectly execute with his hands what he perfectly imagined with his brain.[46]

Varchi's line of reasoning subtly reveals his increasing willingness to associate *ingegno* with the image-making process. Indeed, after arguing that 'the images in one's *fantasia* are not enough, practice is also required', he restates his claim that 'the *ingegno* does not suffice, practice is also required', thereby establishing a parallel between *fantasia* and *ingegno.* From a writer so accustomed to neatly distinguishing the faculties of the mind, this tendency is a sign of the fluidity of the notion of *ingegno* in his time.[47] Furthermore, other passages betray his inclination to associate

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[45] Varchi lists an impressive array of synonyms for the *idea*: *forma, specie* or *spezie, immagine, sembianza, exemplar* or *essemplare, essempio, similitudine, intenzione, concetto, modello, simulacro* or even *fantasma* (Varchi, *Due lezioni* 18 and 25).

[46] '[N]on tutti i maestri ve le sanno immaginare belle a un modo, né condurre a perfezzione egualmente quelle che si sono immaginati eglino stessi. Percioché, oltra quello che i Greci chiamano *idea* [...], ciò è quella imagine che si forma ciascuno nella fantasia, ogni volta, che vuole fare che che sia, si ricerca ancora l'arte e la pratica; onde chi non ha queste potrebbe immaginar bene et operare male, perché nell'arti manuali non basta l'ingegno, ma bisogna l'esercitazione [...]; ma quello è solo vero maestro che puo perfettamente mettere in opera colle mani quello che egli s'è perfettamente immaginato col cervello.' Varchi, *Due lezioni* 18, also in Barocchi, *Scritti* vol. 2, 1323-1324. On the role of practice, see Mendelsohn, *Paragoni* 100. The passage also echoes Alberti's *De pictura* on 'quella idea de la bellezza, ch'a pena gli eccellentissimi ingegni possono discernere [this idea of beauty, that the most subtle *ingegni* can barely discern]'. See Alberti Leon Battista, *La pittura di Leonbattista Alberti*, trans. L. Domenichi (Venice, Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari: 1547) 40. Domenichi's translation of *De pictura*, from which I quote, was certainly the first widely accessible vernacular version. At least it was the one known to Vasari, who recorded that 'Alberti wrote three books *On Painting*, today translated into the Tuscan language by Messer Ludovico Domenichi'. Quoted in Alberti L.B., *On Painting. A New Translation and Critical Edition*, ed. and trans. R. Sinisgalli (Cambridge: 2011) 11. Note the publication date: 1547.

[47] Michelangelo's magnificence, Varchi once wrote, is so great that 'non puo nè comprendere intelletto, nè immaginare fantasia, nè ritener memoria [neither can the intellect comprehend it, nor the *fantasia*

ingegno with imagination, as, for example, when he writes of something 'immaginato collo ingegno'.[48] In sum, Varchi inherits theories of cognition which tend to distinguish higher, intellectual mental powers — including *ingegno* — from low and material *fantasia*. Yet he fosters the assimilation of *ingegno* and *fantasia* by positing that the objects of *fantasia*, being Platonic ideas, are not material but primarily intellectual.

Minerva in the Forge of Vulcan

It is significant that the two most important authors writing about Michelangelo after the publication of Varchi's lectures both praised Michelangelo's imagination. In 1553 Ascanio Condivi (1525-1574), a keen reader of the *Due lezzioni*, underlined Michelangelo's supremely powerful 'virtù imaginativa'.[49] In the second edition of his *Vite* (1568), Vasari amended his biography of Michelangelo by inserting praise of his 'immaginativa' in a passage particularly relevant here, in which he calls the artist 'questo ingegno' — a term one is tempted to translate as 'this genius':[50]

> Michelangelo had such a distinctive and perfect imagination [*immaginativa*] and the works he envisioned were of such a nature that he found it impossi-

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imagine it, nor memory retain it]', in Varchi Benedetto, *Orazione funerale ... nell'essequie di Michelagnolo* (Florence, Giunti: 1564) 65.

[48] Varchi, *Due lezioni* 16. Varchi is, however, sensitive to the non-empirical nature of *ingegno* when he attributes to the *ingegno* the ability, for a sculptor, to work his chisel 'in places where the eyes can barely reach' or in cases where, like for Michelangelo's *Moses* which he cites, the block is too big to be apprehended visually in its entirety while sculpting (Varchi, *Due lezioni* 106). Here, as in the tradition, the *ingegno* seems to be the ability of performing a *cognitio incognitorum* (see above n. 33).

[49] Vasari Giorgio, *Le vite di Michelangelo Buonarroti*, ed. K. Frey (Berlin: 1887) 210, cited in Vasari, *Vita di Michelangelo* vol. 4, 1846, n. 699.

[50] Few uses of *ingegno* in Varchi already point in this direction: 'tanti grand'uomini e cosi peregrini ingegni' (Varchi, *Due lezioni* 101); 'Mag. Lorenzo de'Medici vecchio, il quale conobbe, volle, seppe, et potette innalzare si grande ingegno [i.e. Michelangelo's]' (ibid. 53).

> ble to express such grandiose and awesome conceptions [*concetti*] with his hands, and he often abandoned his works, or rather ruined many of them, as I myself know, because just before his death he burned a large number of his own drawings, sketches and cartoons to prevent anyone from seeing the labours [*fatiche*] he endured or the ways he tested his *ingegno*, for fear that he might seem less than perfect. [...] And although [these drawings] display the greatness of this *ingegno*, they also reveal that when he wanted to bring forth Minerva from the head of Jupiter he needed Vulcan's hammer.[51]

Vasari's final remark is, of course, a disguised reference to the exchange between Michelangelo and Varchi quoted above. However, Vasari adds the fact that what comes out of Jupiter's head is Minerva, a detail Michelangelo had omitted. Since Latin antiquity, Minerva was associated with *ingenium* and rhetorical talent.[52] The parallel had been applied to the *ingenia* of poets, as in an encomium of Dante (long attributed to Boccaccio but most probably of sixteenth-century vintage) where on top of praise for his *alta fantasia* Dante is named 'the obscure Minerva':

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[51] 'Ha avuto l'immaginativa tale e sì perfetta, che le cose propostosi nella idea sono state tali che con le mani, per non potere esprimere sì grandi e terribili concetti, ha spesso abandonato l'opere sue, anzi ne à guasto molte, come io so che, innanzi che morissi di poco, abruciò gran numero di disegni, schizzi e cartoni fatti di man sua, acciò nessuno vedessi le fatiche durate da lui et i modi di tentare l'ingegno suo, per non apparire se non perfetto. Et [io ne ho alcuni di sua mano trovati in Fiorenza, messi nel nostro Libro de' disegni, dove,] ancora che si vegga la grandezza di quello ingegno, si conosce che, quando e' voleva cavar Minerva della testa di Giove, ci bisognava il martello di Vulcano.' Vasari, *Vita di Michelangelo* vol. 1, 117; Vasari, *Le vite* vol. 6, 108-109; translation from Vasari, *The Lives* 472. Vasari clearly knew Varchi's first lecture, as he mentions it elsewhere in his life of Michelangelo. We may wonder why his praise of imagination does not already feature in the first edition of the *Vite* (Florence, Torrentino: 1550). It is likely that Vasari attended the lecture on 6 March 1547, as the lecture was public, and he was certainly also invited to the one on 13 March since he had participated in the poll. His manuscript of the *Vite* was perhaps already too advanced to be reworked. See Giovio's letter about the completion of the *Vite* on 8 July 1547, and Domenichi's letter about printing the book on 15 October, in Frey K. (ed.), *Giorgio Vasari: Der literarische Nachlass* (Hildesheim: 1982) vol. 1, 199, 202.

[52] On the birth of the association between Minerva and *ingenium*, see Morgan L., "On the Good Ship *ingenium*: *Tristia* 1.10", in Hunter R.L. – Oakley S.P. – Reeve M.D. (eds.), *Latin Literature and its Transmission: Papers in Honour of Michael Reeve* (Cambridge: 2016) 245-264, 255-257. In relation to Cicero's rhetorical talent, Minerva was called 'teacher of the arts', and some suggest this is because Cicero was educated in Athens, namely Athena-Minerva. See Harrison S., "Cicero's *De temporibus suis*: The Evidence Reconsidered", *Hermes* 118, 4 (1990) 455-463, 461.

Dante Aligeri [*sic*] son, Minerva oscura	I am Dante Alighieri, obscure Minerva
D'intelligenza, e d'arte, nel cui ingegno	Intelligent and artful, in whose *ingegno*
L'eleganza materna aggiunse al segno	Maternal elegance unites with the sign
Che si tien gran miracol di natura.	That is considered a great miracle of nature
L'alta mia fantasia pronta e sicura	My high *fantasia* ready and assured
Paßò 'l Tartareo, e poi 'l celeste regno;	Went through Tartarus and in the kingdom of heaven
E 'l nobil mio volume feci degno	And I made my noble book worthy
Di temporal, e spiritual lettura.	Of both temporal and spiritual reading.[53]

The survival into the Renaissance of the association of a deity with an idea or concept – in particular, Minerva with *ingegno* – comes as no surprise.[54] This allegorical mode underwent considerable expansion in the age of Vasari. Following the mid-Cinquecento surge of interest in emblematics and symbolism, artists increasingly used personifications to derive visual representations of complex notions such as the relationship between different concepts, or something like a theory.[55] We may ask ourselves whether the reception of Varchi's lectures did not give rise to pictorial attempts

[53] 'Sonetto di M. Gio. Boccaccio in lode di Dante', in: Alighieri Dante, *La divina comedia di Dante con la dichiaratione de' vocaboli piu importanti*, ed. L. Dolce (Venice, Domenico Farri: 1578), unpaginated, directly after the dedication. The last verse shows an endorsement of Dante's view (*Convivio,* II, 1) that secular poetry is also amenable to the theologians' four levels of interpretation, applied in turn to the very *Commedia*. The sonnet has been widely published as an epigraph to the *Commedia* through the Renaissance. See Gilson S.A., *Dante and Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: 2005) 242, n. 28. Its attribution to Boccaccio has been challenged. See Wilkins E.H., "The Sonnet 'Dante Alighieri Son...'", *Modern Language Notes* 26, 5 (1911) 137-139.

[54] On this phenomenon in general, see Seznec J., *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: the Mythological Tradition and its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art* (New York: 1953).

[55] On this dynamic, see Fenech Kroke A., *Giorgio Vasari: la fabrique de l'allégorie* (Florence: 2011), esp. chap. 2, II, 'La personnification entre philosophie et rhétorique'.

of this kind. As far as his 1547 discussion of the relation between *ingegno* and *fatica* is concerned, we ought to consider a small painting on copper by Vasari now in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Known as *The Forge of Vulcan*, it also has been referred to under the title of *Ingenium and Ars* [Fig. 2].[56]

Vincenzo Borghini (1515-1580) — a Benedictine monk and philologist, and Vasari's foremost advisor on all matters iconographic — devised the painting's *invenzione*. His initial idea survives in a manuscript in Borghini's hand and addressed to Vasari.[57] Borghini suggested a depiction of Vulcan forging Achilles's shield following the descriptions of Homer and Virgil, but 'adapted to our purpose [*il proposito nostro*], as we have mused together', where Thetis, who commissioned the shield, would be replaced by Minerva.[58] Vasari painted Borghini's 'blazing furnace' and 'three naked young men making various weapons and armors', with assistants and *putti*.[59] He also rendered Minerva holding a set square and a pair of compasses, emblems of theory,

[56] The title *Ingenium et Ars* is for example adopted in Mertens V., *Die drei Grazien: Studien zu einem Bildmotiv in der Kunst der Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden: 1994) 398. For a bibliography on the painting, see Cecchi A. – Baroni Vannucci A. – Fornasari L. (eds.), Giorgio Vasari. Disegnatore e pittore, exh. cat., Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea (Milan: 2011), no. 34, to which should be added Lecoq A.-M., "Vasari et le bouclier d'Achille", in Capodieci L. – Ford P. (eds.), *Homère à la Renaissance: Mythe et transfigurations* (Paris – Rome: 2011) 345-360; Ruffini M., *Art without an Author: Vasari's Lives and Michelangelo's Death* (New York: 2011) 64; Reitz E., "Die Schmiede des Vulkan als Spiegel des Selbst", in Fleckner U. – Steinkamp M. – Ziegler H. (eds.), *Der Künstler in der Fremde: Migration – Reise – Exil* (Berlin – Boston: 2015) 27-45; Härb F., *The Drawings of Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574)* (Rome: 2015) 519-521. A publication by Alexander Linke about the painting is in preparation. I am grateful to Dr Linke for discussing his research with me, and to Lorraine de la Verpillière for bringing Lecoq's essay to my attention.

[57] Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence, Magl. II.X.114, 50. Reproduced in Scoti-Bertinelli U., *Giorgio Vasari scrittore* (Pisa: 1906) 95, n. 1, and also in Mertens, *Die Drei Grazien* 174, n. 3. The manuscript is known to scholarship as the 'inventioni per pitture fatte'. For a detailed commentary of the text, see Belloni G. – Drusi R. (eds.), *Vincenzio Borghini: filologia e invenzione nella Firenze di Cosimo I* (Florence: 2002) 103-107. On Borghini's relation to Vasari, see Williams R., "Vasari and Vincenzo Borghini", in Cast D.J. (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Giorgio Vasari* (Farnham: 2014) 23-40.

[58] Scoti-Bertinelli, *Vasari scrittore* 95, n. 1: '...accommodato al proposito nostro, come habbiamo ragionato insieme'.

[59] On the shield, a Capricorn and an Aries – zodiacal signs of Cosimo I and Francesco I de' Medici – hold a globe.

pointing to her prominent (pregnant?) belly.[60] Vasari departed from the *invenzione* with regard to the interaction between the two gods. While Borghini wanted Vulcan to be showing the shield to Minerva, Vasari painted Vulcan actively sculpting while looking at a sheet of paper shown to him by the goddess. This sheet is the *disegno*, or project drawing, for the piece.[61] The drawing is in the hands of the deity associated with the mind, in keeping with the ideal definition of *disegno* in Vasari's *Vite* (1568) as an 'expression of the *concetto* imagined in the mind'.[62] Vasari thus fully exploits the polysemy of the word *disegno* which, in addition to a drawing, could also signify the product of thought (*disegnare* meant 'to think').[63]

Vasari's image mirrors the mutual dependence of conception and execution, while suggesting the interrelationship of the *inventore* (Borghini) and the *artefice* (Vasari himself).[64] Indeed, some authors described the relationship between *ars* and *ingenium* as an inseparable unity, and even compared it to the conjunction between mind and body. In the chapter 'Ars et Ingenium' of his *Hieroglyphica* (1556) Pierio Valeriano Bolzano mentions a story of the marriage between Pallas (Minerva) and Vulcan which was appropriated by the ancients 'as seen in the Orphic hymns' to explain that

[60] On the links between pregnancy and *ingegno*, see Marr, "Pregnant Wit"; on pregnancy and artistic creativity with special attention to the figure of Vulcan, see Pfisterer U., "Zeugung der Idee – Schwangerschaft des Geistes", in Pfisterer U. – Zimmermann A. (eds.), *Animationen, Transgressionen: das Kunstwerk als Lebewesen* (Berlin: 2005) 41-72.
[61] Here I follow Julian Kliemann in Corti L. – Davis M.D. (eds.), Giorgio Vasari: principi, letterati e artisti nelle carte di Giorgio Vasari, exh. cat., Casa Vasari (Florence: 1981) *contra* Härb, *Drawings of Vasari* 520, who sided with Kliemann's first opinion (Kliemann J., "Zeichnungsfragmente aus der Werkstatt Vasaris", *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 20 (1978) 157-208, 167) that the paper should have carried a *motto* which Borghini sent too late.
[62] '... esso disegno altro non sia che una apparente espressione e dichiarazione del concetto che si ha nell'animo, e di quello che altri si è nella mente imaginato e fabbricato nell'idea'. Vasari, *Le vite* vol. 1, 111.
[63] Venuti Filippo, *Dittionario volgare, e latino* (Venice, Giovanni Andrea Valvassori: 1574) column 301. *Disegnare* means *deliberare*.
[64] Härb, *Drawings of Vasari* 521.

Minerva's and Vulcan's respective strengths coexist in each being.[65] This, writes Valeriano, is the reason why androgyny, or the coincidence of female and male, was regarded as a sign of higher perfection in antiquity.[66]

Of particular relevance is a short passage in Vincenzo Cartari's *Imagini de i dei degli antichi* (Venice, 1571), where Minerva is directly associated with artistic invention. The arts are said to have been given to men by Prometheus, but were in fact created by Minerva,

> ...because the human *ingegno* has discovered all the things we create, and keeps discovering every day, and does it by means of fire, given that in all arts two things are necessary: one is industry [*industria*], and invention [*inventione*], the other is the act of executing the work, and doing what the *ingegno* has designed. The former is signified by Minerva, and the latter by Vulcan, namely by fire, since by the name of Vulcan we mean the fire which is used to make all things.[67]

The text then echoes the very same concerns discussed above regarding the immateriality of *ingegno* in relation to the materiality of art practice:

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[65] Valeriano Bolzani Pierio, *Hieroglyphica sive de sacris Aegyptiorum literis commentarii* (Basel, Michael Isengrin: 1556) Lib. XVIII, 135 (this edition also features the portrait of Valeriano, crowned by Hermes and Pallas-Minerva). This source was first pointed out by Winner M., "Gemalte Kunsttheorie: Zu Gustave Courbets 'Allégorie réelle' und der Tradition", *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 4 (1962) 150-185, 160. It was further explored in Mertens, *Die Drei Grazien* 175, and reassessed in Lee H., *Kunsttheorie in der Kunst: Studien zur Ikonographie von Minerva, Merkur und Apollo im 16. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: 1996) 18-21.

[66] The belief in the superiority of androgynes, which probably comes from Plato's *Symposium* (Speech of Aristophanes, 189e), manifested itself powerfully in the *Rosarium philosophorum* (1550) as signifying that perfection is achieved by the alchemical combination of opposites.

[67] '...perche l'ingegno humano ha trouato ciò che tra noi si fa, e troua anco tutto di, e fallo con il mezzo del fuoco, conciosia che in tutte le arti due cose faccino di bisogno. L'una è l'industria, e la inuentione, l'altra il porre in opera, e fare quello che l'ingegno ha disegnato. Quella s'intende per Minerua, questo per Volcano, ciò è pel fuoco, che sotto il nome di Volcano è inteso il fuoco il quale ci è istromento à fare tutte le cose.' Cartari Vincenzo, *Le imagini de i dei degli antichi* (Venice, Giordano Ziletti: 1571) 387.

> It is true that art cannot always put into effect what the *ingegno* invents, because art is connected to the body, and cannot leave it or do more than the body can do, while the *ingegno* often departs from it, and muses at leisure considering the works of nature and the creation of God, and sometimes imagines doing similar things, the products of which, however, can never be seen because they are just vain imaginings [*imaginationi vane*].[68]

These passages from Cartari and Valeriano were identified early on by scholars as potential sources for the iconography of Vasari's *Forge of Vulcan.*[69] Yet we may ask whether the main *telos* of the picture is not chiefly to respond to Varchi's discussion of the dynamic relationship between *ingegno* and *fatica*, and to affirm the equal importance of both. As recent findings have shown, the painting was made between May and October 1564.[70] This coincides with a period of renewed interest in Varchi's *Due lezzioni* in the context of the creation of the Accademia del Disegno, the first modern academy of art.[71] Emulating the Accademia Fiorentina, the Accademia del Disegno was founded on 13 January 1563 by Cosimo I de' Medici on the initiative of Vasari, with Borghini as its vice-president (*luogotenente*).[72] We know from a letter to Vasari (dated 14 February 1564) that Borghini was deeply engaged in the study of Varchi's

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[68] 'Gli è ben uero, che non puo sempre l'arte porre in effetto tutto quello che l'ingegno troua, perche quella sta legata al corpo, e non puo da lui partire, ne fare piu di quanto egli puo, ma questo lo lascia souente, e discorre à suo piacere considerando l'opere della natura, e quello che fa Dio, & imagina talhora di fare anch'egli cose simili, di che non si uede però mai effetto alcuno, perche sono imaginationi uane.' Cartari, *Imagini* 387.

[69] For the scholarship on the picture's iconography, see note 56 above. On the sources of Vasari and Borghini's allegories and the role of Cartari and Valeriano's texts, see Fenech Kroke, *Giorgio Vasari* 22 and *passim*.

[70] Cecchi et al., Giorgio Vasari. Disegnatore e pittore no. 34.

[71] Varchi, *Paragone* 60-64.

[72] On this institution see in particular Barzman K.-E., *The Florentine Academy and the Early Modern State: the Discipline of Disegno* (Cambridge: 2000), and the compendium Meijer B.W. – Zangheri L. (eds.), *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno: studi, fonti e interpretazioni di 450 anni di storia* (Florence: 2015).

Due lezzioni at the time.[73] Notably, he attempted to provide a theoretical basis for the valuation of *fatica*, through a distinction between purely corporeal *fatica* and what he called *fatica maestrale*, a form of prowess unique to great masters who invent their own *concetti*.[74] It would thus not be surprising if the 'proposito nostro' of which Borghini spoke in his *invenzione* for the painting were a discussion about the Varchian dichotomy of *ingegno* and *fatica*.[75]

In this light, it is worthwhile to reconsider the sonnets which Vasari and Varchi exchanged around the same period. We know that Varchi addressed to the Aretine a poem beginning with the verse *Quant'avete maggior l'ingegno, e l'arte* (*The greater the* ingegno *and* arte [here: skill] *you possess...*), to which the artist replied with the sonnet *Varchi io cognosco ben l'ingegno, e l'arte* (*Varchi, I know well the* ingegno *and the* arte).[76] The poems do not directly address the relationship between intellectual and manual work, but they focus on one's duty to worship God for the gifts he has bestowed upon us, especially artistic talent. Vasari's response sonnet later mentions

[73] Barocchi P., "Una 'Selva di notizie' di Vincenzio Borghini", *Un Augurio a Raffaele Mattioli* (Florence: 1970) 87-172, 89.

[74] Barocchi, "Una "Selva di notizie"", 150-152, esp. 160. On this passage see Feser S., "Geschmiedete Kunst: Vasaris selbsternanntes Erstlingswerk "Venus mit den drei Grazien" im Kontext seiner Autobiographie", in Burzer K. et al. (eds.), *Le Vite del Vasari: genesi, topoi, ricezione* (Venice: 2010) 53-66, 55-57, and Jonietz, "*Labor omnia vincit*?", 593-594.

[75] The idea of a bespoke 'proposito nostro' recalls Vasari's notion of an allegorical 'senso nostro'. See McGrath E., "'Il senso nostro': The Medici Allegory Applied to Vasari's Mythological Frescoes in the Palazzo Vecchio", in Garfagnini G.C. (ed.), *Giorgio Vasari: tra decorazione ambientale e storiografia artistica* (Florence: 1985) 117-134.

[76] The sonnets were first published in: Varchi Benedetto, *Sonetti spirituali* (Florence, Giunti: 1573), 46 (Varchi) and 92 (Vasari). Later in: Varchi B., *Opere di Benedetto Varchi*, ed. G.B. Busini (Trieste: 1858) vol. 2, 992 (Varchi only). Vasari's sonnet exists in another form in the Ms. Riccardiano 2948, fol. 7a, published in Scoti-Bertinelli, *Vasari scrittore* 268, however Scoti-Bertinelli failed to notice the difference between the two versions. On Vasari's poetry, with an assessment of Scoti-Bertinelli's edition of the ms., see Mattioda E., "Le poesie di Vasari dal Ms. Riccardiano 2948", in Baggio S. – Benigni P. – Toccafondi D. (eds.), *Giorgio Vasari: la casa, le carte, il teatro della memoria* (Florence: 2015) 203-214. On Varchi's poetry see Pirotti U., *Benedetto Varchi e la cultura del suo tempo* (Florence: 1971) 185-287; Chiodo D., "Varchi rimatore: modi e forme della poesia di corrispondenza", in Bramanti V. (ed.), *Benedetto Varchi, 1503-1565* (Rome: 2007) 157-171. The poems bear no date. According to Pirotti the *Sonetti spirituali* are the work of a Varchi 'by now old and tired' (Pirotti, *Varchi e la cultura* 194), thus it seems plausible to date the exchange around 1563, when Varchi turned sixty.

the value of the pair of compasses and the set square (the tools held by Minerva in his copper painting) for 'refining the *arte* and the *ingegno.*' We may hypothesize that this particular exchange veils an art-theoretical subtext – the same subtext underlying the iconography of the *Forge of Vulcan*. In the field of poetry, then, the *ingegno/fatica* pair would have mutated back into the Horatian couple of *ingegno/arte*.[77]

The most striking feature of Vasari's painting is the way in which the duality of *ingegno/fatica*, respectively *ingegno/arte*, is reflected in the architecture of the space depicted. Borghini concluded his *invenzione* by granting Vasari freedom with regard to the background, specifying only that he should 'keep in mind not to do the workshop of a smith so much as a dignified Academy of virtuosi [*Academia di certi virtuosi*] in which Minerva appears'.[78] In fact, Vasari included both the smithy and the Academy, clearly dividing the architecture into two spaces: the domains of *ingegno* (left) and of *fatica* (right).[79] The domain of *ingegno* has consistently been interpreted in the scholarly literature as reflecting Vasari's ideal vision of the Accademia del Disegno.[80] There is more at hand here, though, than an academy of art [Fig. 3]. Various elements suggest that Vasari alludes to Plato's allegory of the cave, and to a specific theoretical model of the origin of artistic ideas. The two spaces are set in dialogue by the contrasting symbolic use of light. While the realm of *fatica* is illuminated by the blazing furnace, the realm of *ingegno,* shrouded in darkness, is lit up only by a chan-

[77] This may be for theoretical reasons, but also for reasons of metre. Vasari seems to have struggled with metre, and Scoti-Bertinelli often denounced Vasari's 'verso... *ipermetro!*' (Scoti-Bertinelli, *Vasari scrittore* 268, in the foonotes, and see Mattioda, "Le poesie di Vasari", 208-211 for a reassessment of Scoti-Bertinelli's reading of Vasari's poetry). In Varchi's poetic work, the cluster 'ingegno e arte' is relatively frequent.

[78] '...et questo vi sia sopra tutto a mente che non si facci tanto una bottega di fabro, quanto una Academia di certi virtuosi, et degna ove venga Minerva'. Scoti-Bertinelli, *Vasari scrittore* 96 i.f., with Scoti-Bertinelli's faulty transcription corrected in Belloni – Drusi, *Vincenzio Borghini* 104.

[79] An early sketch shows that he initially set the entire scene in a forge, and thought up the realm of *ingenium* only later. See Härb, *Drawings of Vasari* 520, illustration no. 341.

[80] Härb, *Drawings of Vasari* 520; Winner, "Gemalte Kunsttheorie" 159-160 (who called the painting 'das erste echte Akademiebild').

delier. The young, naked students turn their backs to it. They copy from drawings pinned on a wall, but distinct rays of light run straight from the chandelier to the back of their heads. In an arch above this wall, statues of three graces (Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, daughters of *disegno*) dance in harmony.

That this place may be read as a cavern was already suggested by Borghini, who spoke in his instructions of a 'caverna oscura'. Its resonance as a philosophical allegory will be evident if we compare it to the top-left corner of a design by Vasari which has been tentatively interpreted as the image of 'a philosopher', known to us from a copy [Fig. 4].[81] In this picture Vasari also proposed a twofold symbolic background, standing for the mundane temptations (right) and the virtues of philosophy (left).[82] The top-left corner is distinct from the other allegorical areas by virtue of its being peopled by adults rather than *putti.* This domain of the edifying contemplation of Ideas is echoed in the 'Accademia di certi virtuosi' of *The Forge of Vulcan*, which we may take to signify Minerva's cavern or storehouse of *ingenium.*

As we have noted, the rays of light beaming from the chandelier [Fig. 3] are directed to the back of the art students' heads. That those shafts of light stand for the incandescence of inspiration is confirmed by the most prominent of them, which falls on the eyes of a bust. The statue is unrecognizable save for a Phrygian cap, attribute of the poet, and typically of Dante. A ray of light hitting the eyes of the figure recalls the last tercet of the *Commedia,* where divine truth is revealed to Dante as his mind (*mente*) is struck by a shaft of light (*fulgore*). The passage itself deals with the inability of the

[81] Reproduced and discussed in Härb, *Drawings of Vasari* 253 no. 109.1.
[82] We can see it as further divided into four spaces: the earthly pleasures (bottom-right) opposed to the pleasures of study (bottom-left), and the foolish imaginations (top-right) opposed to the contemplation of beauty (top-left).

body to sustain the deep visions of the imagination, which Dante calls the *alta fantasia*.[83]

We may imagine Minerva's workshop at the upper left of *The Forge of Vulcan*, then, as a symbolic depiction of how the creative mind functions for Vasari. Students of art receive the light of the Forms through a non-empirical kind of perception, turning their back to the light like the prisoners of Plato's cave, unlike the incandescent poet Dante who can stare directly at it. Their role is that of the *fantasia,* translating vision into a *concetto* which, for the purposes of Vasari's promotion of *disegno*, takes the form of a sketch on paper. After all, Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola had already described the *phantasia* as 'a blank picture [*nuda tabula*] on which nothing has been painted, nothing delineated' which 'the intellect brightens by its own light'.[84] This symbolic representation of the mind as an academy is also Vasari's affirmation of the specificity of the *ingegno* of an academically trained artist. While philosophers frequently envisioned the mind as an amphitheatre (most notably Giulio Camillo and his

[83] The expression *alta fantasia* was employed in the sonnet in praise of his *ingegno* quoted above. Interpreters at the time did read this passage through the lens of Aristotelian theories of the *phantasia*, as evidenced for example by Vellutello's commentary. See Alighieri D. – Vellutello A., *La comedia di Dante Aligieri con la nova espositione di Alessandro Vellutello* (Venice: 1544), unpaginated, *ad* Paradiso XXXIII, v. 142. On the *alta fantasia,* see also Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language* 103-143.

[84] Pico della Mirandola, *On the Imagination* 40-41 (chap. VI). The pictographic metaphor is probably inspired by Aristotle, *De anima* 427b24-6. The fact that Vasari embraced such a theory of imagination is clear from his writings. In the second edition of the *Vite* (1568) – in which a reference to Varchi's lecture of Michelangelo is made, showing Vasari's awareness of it – his initial definition of *disegno* is replaced by a characterization of it as 'apparent expression and declaration of the *concetto* which one has in the soul [*animo*], and of that which is imagined in the mind [*mente*] and fabricated in the *idea*'. See Vasari in Vasari, *Le vite*, I, 111, and Panofsky, *Idea* 60-63, esp. 63, who lists more passages from Vasari exhibiting a Neoplatonic tone. Minerva, who presides over the think tank, takes the best *concetto* to the eyes of the body, Vulcan, who will give them corporeal form through corporeal *fatica*. The fact that it takes a goddess to carry over the *disegno* is an interesting pagan anticipation of Federico Zuccari's view of *di-segno* as *segno-di-Di'* (sign of God). See Zuccari Federico, *L'Idea de' pittori, scultori et architetti* (Turin, Agostino Disserolio: 1607) II, 83 (cap. 16), quoted in Panofsky, *Idea* 88.

influential *theatro*), the artistic *ingegno* is suggested to resemble a different kind of amphitheatre: the classroom of an academy of art.[85]

It is also worth pointing out that the naked figure falling from the sky to crown Vulcan with laurel closely resembles the naked boy falling from the sky in Michelangelo's *Dream* drawing (c. 1533, London, Courtauld Gallery).[86] This would buttress the likelihood that Vasari meditated Michelangelo's or Varchi's theories of artistic imagination, as the *Dream* is closely connected to the *Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto* sonnet on which Varchi lectured. In the poem, Michelangelo likened the quest for the concretization of the *concetto* in the marble block to the impossible quest for his beloved. The same theme figures in Valeriano's reading of the love between Vulcan and Minerva, and Vasari too appears to invoke it, as his Vulcan seems to kneel in admiration before the goddess.

It has been suggested that Vasari's Vulcan is a disguised portrait of Benvenuto Cellini and, more recently, of Vasari himself.[87] It seems more likely, given the foregoing, that Vasari's sturdy smith represents Michelangelo.[88] Consider the aforementioned anec-

[85] On Giulio Camillo's *theatro*, see Bolzoni L., *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press* (Toronto – London: 2001).
[86] On this drawing, see Buck S. (ed.), Michelangelo's Dream, exh. cat., The Courtauld Gallery (London: 2010). I am grateful to Alexander Marr for pointing this out.
[87] For the Vulcan-as-Cellini reading, see Scalini M., *Benvenuto Cellini* (Florence – London: 1995) 41 and fig. 49, whose hypothesis was followed without discussion by Scholl D., *Von den "Grottesken" zum Grotesken: die Konstituierung einer Poetik des Grotesken in der italienischen Renaissance* (Münster: 2004) 414. This, however, is highly unlikely, given the intense rivalry between Cellini and Vasari (see Gardner Coates V.C., "Rivals with a Common Cause: Vasari, Cellini, and the Literary Formulation of the Ideal Renaissance Artist", in Cast D.J. (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Giorgio Vasari* (Farnham: 2014) 215-222) and the fact that the year 1564 marked their definitive fallout (see Barocchi, "Una "Selva di notizie"", 87-88). The Vulcan-as-Vasari reading was proposed by Sabine Feser (Feser, "Geschmiedete Kunst", 56). This *ogni dipintore dipinge se* hypothesis is tempting, were it not for the ageing Vasari would have applied to himself – compare the white hair and beard of Vulcan to the still brown hair of Vasari in his half-length portrait (c. 1570) in the Uffizi or his likeness in the Pala Albergotti for example.
[88] It may be compared to the image of a sculptor at work wearing only a loincloth, with a chisel in his left hand and a raised hammer in the right hand, which was used as a portrait of Michelangelo in Si-

dote that Vasari included in the *Vite* (1568), which associates Michelangelo's *ingegno* with Minerva and his strength with Vulcan. We should also bear in mind that the very months of the painting's genesis, between May and October 1564, were marked by the preparation of Michelangelo's great funeral ceremony in Florence, which took place on 14 July 1564 in the church of San Lorenzo.[89] The iconographical programme for this ceremony was conceived under the direction of Vasari and Borghini themselves, and it has been argued that Varchi may also have been directly involved.[90] The complex ensemble of works realized on this occasion featured a figure of Vulcan, as well as the only other known allegory of *ingegno* made in these years: a psychomachic statue of *Ingegno subduing Ignorance* by Vincenzo Danti (now lost), which stood prominently on Michelangelo's catafalque.[91] In this case *Ingegno* was not represented by way of the traits of Minerva, but figured by a slender youth 'tutto spirito e di bellissima vivacità [all animation and beautiful liveliness]'.[92] Although infinitely more complex than the *Forge of Vulcan* from an iconographical point of view, the artworks realised for Michelangelo's funerals also illuminate the small copper painting: they constitute the first collective work by the Accademia del Disegno, and were

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gismondo Fanti's *Triompho di Fortuna* (Venice, Giacomo Giunta: 1527). On this stock image being a portrait of Michelangelo, see Johnson G., "Michelangelo, Fortunetelling and the Formation of Artistic Canons in Fanti's *Triompho di Fortuna*", in Jones L.R. – Matthew L.C. (eds.), *Coming About: a Festschrift for John Shearman* (Cambridge, Mass.: 2001) 199-205.

[89] Michelangelo passed away on 18 February 1564, and his body arrived in Florence on 10 March. On his funeral, see Petrioli Tofani A., "L'apparato per le esequie di Michelangelo", in Meijer B.W. – Zangheri L. (eds.), *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno: studi, fonti e interpretazioni di 450 anni di storia* (Florence: 2015) 457-471; Ruffini, *Art without an Author* 11-38; Wittkower R. – Wittkower M., *The Divine Michelangelo: the Florentine Academy's Homage on his Death in 1564* (London: 1964).

[90] According to Leatrice Mendelsohn 'it is likely that [Varchi] too was responsible for some aspects of the program' (Mendelsohn, *Paragoni* 80). Varchi delivered the main funeral oration.

[91] See Wittkower – Wittkower, *The Divine Michelangelo* 96-97. For the Vulcan statue, see p. 114 and p. 158. On the destiny of these statues, see Waźbiński Z., "La prima mostra dell'Accademia del Disegno a Firenze", *Prospettiva* 14 (1978) 47-57, 51.

[92] Wittkower – Wittkower, *The Divine Michelangelo* 96-97. The boy is said to have 'two small wings at his temples such as one sometimes sees in representations of Mercury'. This choice, instead of Minerva, is perhaps due to the fact that Minerva was already employed on the other side of the catafalque to stand for Art. However it should be noted that, according to an earlier sketch for the catafalque now in the Ambrosiana, *Ingegno* was placed where Minerva originally stood (namely in the right hand side while facing the monument). See Wittkower – Wittkower, *The Divine Michelangelo* fig. 8, to be compared with the Wittkowers' reconstruction p. 148.

meant as a gift honouring Michelangelo's exceptional talent, not unlike the drawing carried by Minerva which, conceived by an academy of draughtsmen, is being presented to Vulcan. It seems likely, then, that the *Forge of Vulcan* was painted in Michelangelo's memory. In any case, it is striking that the commemoration of Michelangelo's talent coincides with new proposals for the allegorical depiction of *ingegno.* Varchi's theories of creativity certainly played a role in this dynamic. At this stage, through the use of personification, *ingegno* was on the verge of being equated with the greatness of an individual *per se* — adumbrating the later qualification of a great artist as a 'genius'. The early cult of Michelangelo foreshadowed this etymology.

Conclusion

One can hardly overemphasize the legitimacy of Édouard Pommier's caution in translating the word *ingegno*. In the parlance of sixteenth-century writers on art in the *volgare*, the word was still ubiquitous, and remarkably fluid. What this essay shows, however, is that *ingegno* was also framed in theoretical terms. Varchi's discussion of *ingegno* and *fatica* in the *Due lezzioni* serves as an important landmark, as it inscribes the term within a broader theory of artistic creativity. This discussion maintained a key aspect of the humanistic heritage of *ingegno*: its pairing with a complementary notion. The counterpart of *ingegno* initially chosen by Varchi was not *arte* or *industria*, but *fatica* – a loaded term in that intellectual environment. The importance of Varchi's discussion with and lectures to the artists and critics of his day suggests that his *ingegno/fatica* dichotomy may have lived on in a number of ways, and most eloquently in allegorical depictions such as Vasari's *Forge of Vulcan*, where *ingegno* presents a *disegno* to the artist's bodily eyes while presiding over a parable of Platon-

ic contemplation. The painting captures Vasari's reception of and reaction to conceptions of creativity promulgated by Varchi at the time of the foundation of the Accademia del Disegno, and expresses his own vision of the academic culture peculiar to visual artists: one where both *ingegno* and *fatica* are needed equally, and where, as Vasari would recount in his *Vite*, no Minerva escapes from Jove's brain without the hammer of Vulcan.

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